

tures representing them. The one is an aged person, in a ruff, well drawn, with one hand putting a compass upon a rule, held in the other, and underwrit, 'WILLIAM PORTINGTON, Esq., master carpenter in the office of his Majesty's buildings, who served that place 40 years, and departed this life the 28th of March, 1628, aged 84 years; who was a well-wisher of this society. This being the gift of Matthew Banks, who served fourteen years, is at this present master of the said company, August 14th, 1637.'

The other picture is more modern, and underwritten: 'This picture of John Scot, Esq., carpenter and carriage-maker to the office of ordinance, in the reign of King Charles II., was placed here by his apprentice, Matthew Banks, Esq., master carpenter to his Majesty, and master of this company this present year, 1694.'

A table also hangs up for Richard Wiat, of London, Esq., thrice master of this Company of Carpenters, Ann. Dom. 1604, 1605, 1616, and a good benefactor therunto. Among other gifts he gave 500*l.* to build an almshouse near Godalming in Surrey, for ten poor men, and 50*l.* a year to maintain them. And his wife added something for the company to go down to visit it. In vol. i. p. 373, speaking of the parish of Allhallows, London Wall, he says, 'In this parish is Carpenters' Hall, an old building of timber, with nothing very remarkable in it.' The company still preserve the two portraits in their meeting room, the old hall having been let by them for other purposes.

The company possess also (and still use on one day in the year), four very curious caps or crowns. The oldest and at the same time handsomest, is dated 1561. They have also some good silver cups, one of them particularly elegant. This has no date; two others are dated 1612 and 1628.

Malcolm, in his *Lindonium Redivivum*, 1803 (vol. ii. p. 79), speaks of a manuscript account of the foundation of this company, its statutes, benefactions, and list of masters and wardens, in the Cottonian Library, Vitellius F. xvi., which was so damaged in the fire which injured that library as to be illegible; and although the company possess some very old records, Mr. Japp informs me he has not been enabled to find any entry which will give any information as to the date of the building, there being no records between the years 1515 and 1531, and no money accounts until 1551. It is very probable that the old hall was constructed about the period when this lapse in the books occurs, as the portions of it incorporated in the more modern buildings are evidently as old, if not older, than that date.

The length of the apartment is about 52 feet, the width about 26 feet.

The exterior of the hall possesses no traces of antiquity; the date upon the water spouts is 1722; the front consists of a neat Doric basement with arches, windows, and porticoes, as the east and west ends. On the basement is a rustic story, ornamented with cornices, pediments, &c., and the arched bearings of the city and company. (Huguenot's *London*, 1806, vol. iii. p. 28.) Malcolm speaks of the 'ancient hall, and alluding to its internal aspect says, 'the roof of this hall has been originally of oak, something like that of Westminster Hall, but that is either demolished or concealed by the present stuccoed ceiling.' This ceiling was constructed in 1671, and the ornamental pilasters which support it, spring from the corbels of the old arched timber roof. The exposure of the upper half of the western end, by the recent removal of its canvas covering, has laid bare the massive oak beams that originally supported it; the paintings which are about to be described, occupying the entire length of the hall, their base being level with the corbels at about the height of 9 feet from the ground. They are surmounted by an embattled oak beam, and measure 3 feet in height and 23 in length; being broken and destroyed at some distance from the north side.

The paintings—which all bear some reference to carpentry—are divided into four compartments by ornamental columns, painted in distemper. The laths, which form the groundwork, are placed at right angles with each other, and some few lathes apart; upon this is a thick layer of brown earth and clay, strengthened or held together with straw, and

it is not unworthy of notice that the ancient fresco painter used finely chopped straw to form the intonaco of their under surfaces. Upon this body of clay, which is of considerable thickness, is spread a layer of lime, about one-sixth of an inch in depth, and upon this the paintings are executed. The first represents the construction of the ark; Noah is represented kneeling on one knee, with his hat in his left hand, and his ads before him, receiving the order for its construction from the Almighty, who is in the clouds above. A tree separates this from the other portion of the picture, where his three sons are busily employed in its formation: one drives a nail into the prow of the vessel, another is engaged behind; the third, in the foreground, rests his hands upon a saw. Of the inscription above, which is much decayed, a portion only of the second line is legible, with the words

center is full of grace and I shall destroy them—

which is addressed to Noah by the Almighty. The subject of the next compartment is obtained from 2 Kings, chap 22, and represents King Josiah ordering the repair of the temple. The king is seated on his throne, attended by two noblemen, and is giving directions to an officer, who stands before him with a staff in one hand and a purse in the other. Behind him is a grave elderly man in a tall cap, who may be intended for the high priest, who is delivering to the workmen the money for the necessary repairs. The choice of this subject may have been originally decided from the complimentary manner in which 'the carpenters and builders' are mentioned in the sacred narrative; for we are told 'there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hands, because they dealt faithfully;' a circumstance not forgot to be recorded in the inscription above, which runs thus:—

Christ Jesus commanded ye to be just ye shall have life
and the kingdom of heaven shall be given to ye
that do them

The next subject, which is perhaps the most curious of the series, represents an incident in the early life of the Saviour. Joseph is represented at his work as a carpenter, while the Saviour is engaged in gathering the chips and placing them in a large basket beside him. Mary is seated on one side busily engaged in spinning with the distaff, and the scene takes place in the court-yard of a house which is built with red brick, the central portion of lath and clay, having a plain thatch; the yard is enclosed with wooden palings, and is entered by a porch of the same humble materials. A single tree grows in the area, its roots supported by a circular framework of timber. Several logs lie about, upon one of which Joseph is busily employed,—apparently in obedience to the orders of a grave figure in a furrow gown, ruff, and cap of the sixteenth century. The inscription above is the only perfect one of the series.

Christ Jesus commanded ye to be just ye shall have life
and the kingdom of heaven shall be given to ye
that do them

This incident was a favourite subject with the ancient artists; Albert Durer has devoted one of the large woodcuts of his series illustrative of the life of the Virgin, to it. This was executed in 1511, and the figure of Joseph is very similar to that in the present picture.

The fourth and last compartment represents the Saviour in his youth teaching in the synagogue. It is the best composition of the series, but has been entirely destroyed on one side; the inscription is still more fragmentary:—

Christ Jesus commanded ye to be just ye shall have life
and the kingdom of heaven shall be given to ye
that do them

Enough is here left to assure us of the reason which dictated the choice of this subject,—the question 'is not this that carpenter's son?'

These paintings are executed in a remarkably free and masterly manner, and the drawing of the figures is always good: I may particularly allude to the officer who stands before the king's throne, and the foremost of the doctors in the last painting, who carries the book; both are exceedingly good, and could not be surpassed by any work of the same age. The thickest limbs, and strongly marked features, as well as the general pose of the

figures, remind us forcibly of Holbein, and certainly refer to that school and period, as the school in which the artist of these works had studied, and the era in which they were executed. They are painted in a vigorous black outline, the tints of the dresses are flat, with little attempt at shadows, and there are occasionally traces of gilding observable. Thus the figure of the Almighty in the first compartment has been entirely gilt, as have the various portions of jewelry worn by the principal figures; the buttons of the dresses, the cuffs of Joseph's sleeves, &c. The costume is interesting, as it may lead us to fix the date of the painting with some degree of certainty. It is not a pure costume belonging to any particular period, but is a mixture of antiquated dress, and the ordinary dress of the artist's own day. The attendants on King Josiah, and the officers in front of his throne, are in the costume of the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII.; but many of the other figures, of the men in the synagogue for instance, are in a strangely heterogeneous sort of dress, but which was much used by scriptural designers at the same period, and is, therefore, valuable, as it also fixes the same date.

Above this series of pictures, in the spandril of the arch, is painted the arms of the company, supported by nude figures of boys, the ground being filled with an enriched scroll, beneath which was painted an inscription in two lines, of which the only two words remaining—'SHRIVES' and 'ROBARD'—would shew that it commemorated the doings of some sheriffs who were especially benefactors to the company. On the southern wall the compartments between the corbels which supported the original timber roof are filled with what is generally termed 'Elizabethan scroll-work,' composed of monsters, cupids, cornucopias, and ornamental panels and foliations; these are in a very decayed and imperfect condition. The fleur-de-lis forms the central ornament of that nearest the great eastern window. The mullions of this window are of carved oak, of massive proportion, with central pillars, whose bases are in the style of the *renaissance*; and these divide it into nine lights: the glass is not very old, and consists of the arms of the company, the city, and the kingdom, and the names of the masters and wardens; the earliest bearing date 1627, and the greatest number being from 1660 to 1684; the latest containing the record, 'this hall was repaired anno Dom. 1718.' The side lights of the window are perfect, and shew the arch of the original roof corresponding to that above the paintings at the west end; but the centre is considerably flattened by the more modern ceiling, which descends much lower; and above which, rooms are constructed. This ceiling was put up in 1771, as the inscription upon it informs us; and is a bold and striking work in its general effect; it is divided into four compartments, containing the arms of the kingdom, the city, and the company, together with the names of the master and wardens in whose time it was erected. Three ancient wooden panels were placed over the door: one containing the arms of the company, and the date 1579; another the names of the wardens for the time being; and the third the name 'Thomas Harper, master, 1579,' with the rebus of his name, a harp, and his mark as a merchant. The only other wood carving in the hall is the original corbels, ten in number; the four at each angle are plain; the two next the window on each side, are of the ordinary design, an angel bearing a shield; the remaining two on the southern wall, have respectively the head of a lion and a man. The most interesting of the series are the two on the northern wall, beneath the modern windows. The one nearest the east wall represents a female with dishevelled hair, her left arm over the neck of a lion, whose mouth reposes on her breast. The next one is a male head, dressed in the Italian cap, with its beard or streamer, which was so very fashionable in the fifteenth century, and which is still the hood of the knights of the garter, used in their investiture, as well as in the investiture of a civic order of not equal importance—the barber surgeons—who always place such a hood upon the shoulders of their newly-elected members; the pendant scarf being placed across the breast, with the same formalities. Neither of these corbels are perfect in their lower portions, but they are exceedingly good in point of workmanship; the

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